



**MIDTERM EVALUATION  
OF  
POPULATION SERVICES INTERNATIONAL'S  
IMPROVING HEALTH THROUGH SOCIAL MARKETING  
PROJECT**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BCC	Behavior change communication
BITNET	Pilot ITN distribution program initiated in Blantyre with PSI
BLM	Banja La Mtsogolo (Marie Stopes International Malawian affiliate)
CDC	U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CHAM	Christian Health Association of Malawi
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
EU	European Union
Global Fund	The Global Fund To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome
HPN	Health, Population and Nutrition
IEC	Information, education, and communication
ITN	Insecticide-treated net
JHU	Johns Hopkins University
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JSI	John Snow, Inc.
KAP	Knowledge, attitudes, and practice
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (German development bank)
MK	Malawian kwacha
MOH	Ministry of Health and Population
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
NAC	National AIDS Commission
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
ORS	Oral rehydration salts
PSI	Population Services International
SO	Strategic Objective
STD	Sexually transmitted disease
STI	Sexually transmitted infection
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Population Services International (PSI) began its social marketing program in Malawi with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) support in 1994. The Chishango condom was the first socially marketed product. The German development bank (KfW) began cofunding this project in 1995. Several years later, PSI expanded its product line by adding maternal and child health products, specifically insecticide-treated bed nets (ITNs) in 1998, retreatment kits in 1999, and oral rehydration salts (ORS) in 1999, under the brand name Thanzi. In November 2002, PSI also introduced a safe water treatment product, WaterGuard, although this product was not directly supported by USAID. PSI has strived to develop working relationships with a variety of international organizations and donors working in Malawi, which has served to further strengthen and complement the core component of USAID's original project. This midterm evaluation was designed to cover the period from the beginning of the current project (2002) to date. Overall, PSI has effectively met and in several cases exceeded the original goals and objectives of the project. The key findings and recommendations are summarized below by product.

### **CONDOM SOCIAL MARKETING**

The Chishango condom, which experienced a sales plateau after several years in the market, has had significant success since it was relaunched in 2002, exceeding its original sales targets and allowing PSI to set new targets for condom sales during the life of the project. There is high visibility of the brand and high brand awareness among Malawian consumers. The relaunch of the condom, which generated a significant amount of controversy at the time, has helped to further desensitize the issue of condoms. PSI's strong technical skills in marketing and promotion and behavior change communication (BCC) as well as the innovative use of nontraditional media are clear strengths of the project. The key recommendations for further strengthening the condom component include

- considering strategies to strengthen distribution among retail outlets,
- reassessing the needs of high-risk audiences and how condom social marketing may address these needs,
- reassessing the degree to which existing generic advertising and BCC interventions are addressing the key behavior indicators included in PSI's log frame, and
- incorporating short-term mechanisms for evaluating the effectiveness of BCC interventions.

PSI has made an important contribution to the Ministry of Health and Population's (MOH) program to increase the distribution of subsidized ITNs. With MOH support, PSI succeeded in a very short period in expanding distribution to over 420 antenatal clinics. In general, the program has benefited from well-coordinated, multidonor support as well as an overall commitment to make ITNs widely accessible in Malawi. Given that the program has evolved significantly and that there are multiple donor agencies involved, it will be

important for USAID to work in conjunction with other key stakeholders to further strengthen both the overall program and PSI's role. The issues to be addressed immediately include

- developing a coordinated donor strategy to address the short and long-term supply needs for ITNs;
- determining whether PSI's capabilities may be helpful in supporting replication and expansion of village health committee sales;
- clarifying the use of ITN (subsidized green nets) revenue and financial support of distribution and logistics;
- determining how to use the underspent USAID funds in PSI's budget for the ITN program given that net revenue has been used to cross-subsidize net distribution (originally programmed for in USAID's budget); in the future, PSI should be more open in discussing with USAID issues related to project expenditures and multiple funding sources; and
- expanding PSI's communication initiatives to address other key malaria prevention behaviors, particularly retreatment of nets.

## **ORAL REHYDRATION SALTS SOCIAL MARKETING**

PSI has also made important progress with the Thanzi product in the last several years. There is an overall high awareness of the product as well as good availability in retail outlets since it is the second most widely available PSI product (the Chishango condom is the most widely available). The key issues to be addressed for Thanzi include

- identifying the source of supply for the next ORS procurement,
- establishing targets for the indicators in the ORS log frame and focusing future marketing and promotional support on these key knowledge and behavior indicators, and
- determining sustainability objectives for Thanzi.

## **WATERGUARD SAFE WATER SYSTEM SOCIAL MARKETING**

The WaterGuard product launched by PSI has had strong success in the few years that it has been available in the marketplace. There is anecdotal evidence that the product has been well accepted among Malawians, and there is high potential for future growth of the product. According to PSI's distribution survey, the product has high visibility in retail outlets and strong brand awareness. Given that PSI has privately funded WaterGuard for the first two years, the key issue is to clarify future donor support for the procurement and promotion of the WaterGuard product.

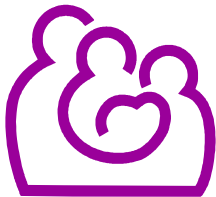
## **GENERAL FINDINGS**

The large majority of organizations that were interviewed regarding their work and collaboration with PSI were very supportive and complimentary of the expertise and responsiveness of the organization. PSI was frequently recognized as the foremost social marketing organization in Malawi and commended for its strong skills in mass media and communications. To further improve the program, it is recommended that PSI

- strengthen overall communication and coordination with the MOH,
- develop stronger ties with the Ministry of Education, and
- ensure the utmost transparency for all donors and international organizations that are funding complementary activities.

As the program for social marketing of health products evolves, a few issues should be taken into consideration for the future, including

- initiating discussions about the future sustainability of the various components of the social marketing project,
- determining sourcing alternatives for products that will require future support,
- initiating discussions about how to ensure growth in the overall condom market, and
- monitoring lessons learned in other HIV/AIDS prevention activities and tracking investments in HIV/AIDS behavior change interventions.



## **POPTech POPULATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT**

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